

## Literature.

*Villa Rustica.* By Charles Parker, F.S.A. Sprigg, Library of Arts, Great Russell-street.

THIS, the third division of Mr. Parker's work, is devoted to an exemplification of buildings intended for educational purposes, designed after the Italian manner; and has more than common claim to notice. A style which in so many hands has degenerated into the fanciful frippery, largely patronized in modern villa building, had need of rescue, and a better adaptation to the climate and landscape of England. The designs for schools given are as various in point of affording accommodation for numbers, as in degree and application of ornament; but there is, to our mind, a better feature of the work, namely the useful hints it affords for a more satisfactory carrying out of the Italian manner; in this respect even those who have passed through the routine of ordinary study, will find the "Villa Rustica" a valuable remembrancer.

## Farneries.

A WORK on this subject, with plans, is in progress for publication by Mr. Bateman, architect, of Lexington and Birmingham. From this gentleman's experience, and the circle of his employment, we may anticipate a useful work on a subject that most unaccountably has obtained a small share of the architect's attention, and none can much exceed it in importance.

## PRESERVATION OF BUILDINGS FROM LIGHTNING.

## TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—The subject of the preservation of buildings from lightning is so very important, that I trust you will excuse my troubling you with a few observations upon it, in which, though there may be nothing new, yet being derived from actual experience, they may not be the less valuable to those who wish to know how an efficient conductor may be executed. Nearly three years ago I was requested to inform myself as to the best means of protecting the spire of a church, then in progress of erection under my immediate superintendence. The evidence given before a committee of the House of Commons, upon Mr. Snow Harris's conductors for ships, was put into my hands, and my task then became very simple. I shall not give any lengthened extracts from the report of the committee, my object being only to tell you what was done in the case alluded to. I should recommend any one wishing for information, to get the report itself, from which they cannot fail to learn much that it is useful to know.

I found it there stated, as part of the evidence of Professor Faraday and others, 1st. That the conducting power of metallic plates would be but little diminished by their continuous solidity being interrupted, so long as the portions of the conductor remained in contact; but even supposing a slight opening in the rod of half an inch or an inch, no injury would be caused by the electricity leaping from one point to the other.

2nd. That when electricity finds a metallic road sufficient to conduct it completely, it never flies to surrounding bodies inferior in conducting power.

3rd. The power of a metal rod for the safe transmission of electricity is in direct proportion to its area of section.

4th. A copper rod of half an inch in diameter has never been known to be fused or heated red-hot by an atmospheric discharge of electricity, and thus a standard of sufficiency is afforded. Upon these data I proceeded, and to 14 inch copper spindle passing through the solid stone about 10 feet, and terminating in a foliated finial above a vane, I attached a continued series of 4 inch copper rods, linked together, hanging loosely in the spire, passing through the leaders of the belfry windows to the outside, and thence enclosed in a chase in the tower wall down to the ground; hence I continued the chain in a small drain, and made it terminate in a cesspool, sunk for the purpose of draining the churchyard. Nothing could be more simple or easy of execution, or, at the same time, more effectual, of which I had satisfactory proof shortly after its completion. The heavy storm which on Sunday morning, January 3, 1841, injured the tower of Stratham church, is believed to have passed immediately over the spire in question. Within a furlong, a large tree was rent, and the masons' tools, in a shed not two hundred feet from the tower, were found scattered afterwards in all directions. A portion also of the wall of the adjoining blacksmith's shop was disturbed. I need hardly say that, on being waked

by the thunder, which was terrific, my first thoughts reverted to the conductor, and how I rejoiced in finding it had been proved and stood the test.

It is indeed surprising that the expense being so trifling, every spire in the kingdom is not furnished with such a chain. Surely the necessity of such a protection cannot be too strongly urged upon the attention of all churchwardens or persons in charge of sacred edifices, who, if not willing, should be obliged to do their duty, and then we should hear no more of beautiful spires destroyed or irreparably injured.

Ten or a dozen years ago, one of the finest spires in the kingdom (that of Rotherham Church) was struck, and much of it destroyed. I believe it has in some way been restored, but I very much question if in its original beauty, and I think it still more problematical whether a lightning conductor has been added. Any one who has observed attentively the spires in most parts of this country, cannot fail to have noticed in how many cases they have been topped and retopped; doubtless, in most cases, rendered necessary by similar visitations, which never would have happened had an efficient conductor been provided; but the recent case of St. Martin's Church ought to open the eyes and stir the active powers of all in charge of such buildings who are not willfully blind or negligent. A timely expenditure of about 30*l.*, or perhaps less, would, in that instance, have saved the outlay of, I believe, 1,000*l.*

In a church now in progress from my designs, having a timber-framed spire, I propose to adopt a similar safeguard, and have made provision for hanging it in the same manner to the vane spindle. I use the copper rods, because the trouble of connecting them is so slight, and they may be more readily twisted about than would a continuous bar.

I fear I have trespassed too long upon your patience, especially after the letters that have been already published in your useful paper; but as mine states what has been done, and proved sufficient, perhaps it may also be useful, and that being your aim and end as well as my own, I have the less scruple in making what might otherwise appear a very unnecessary intrusion upon your time and space.

I am Sir,

your obedient servant and well-wisher,  
London, Aug. 23, 1843. C.

## THE PARISH CHURCH OF LEAMINGTON PRIORY.

## TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—As the clergyman of the parish, and the person who employed both Mr. Jackson and Mr. Mitchell, permit me to state what I consider each of these architects have a right to claim as their due in the design for the re-edification of the parish church.

1st. On my going to Mr. Jackson, I found him preparing a design for the remodeling of the parish church, under the impression, I believe, that this matter would be put up to competition, and the architect whose designs would be most approved of should be employed to carry them into effect. I told him that as the entire responsibility of the whole matter rested upon me, I would not consent to advertise for tenders, as I was aware old-established architects disliked such a mode of procuring business. I informed him, however, it was only a waste of time and perfectly useless for him to finish the design he showed me, as it had neither clerestory nor centre tower, and its elevation was at most but about forty feet. I stated that under any circumstances no such design would be approved of by me, and being willing to do him a service, I took the opportunity of informing him what my views really were, namely, to have, in fact, a new, and I trusted, splendid church; with its lantern tower, spire, chancel, transepts, and clerestory. These ideas I requested Mr. Jackson to lose no time in putting upon paper, a brother clergyman assisting us as to the ground-plan, &c. This Mr. Jackson lost no time in doing, and he sent rough sketches to a friend of his own at York, to make a drawing in water colours from the same. This drawing, showing the design of the whole, was exceedingly well done, and Mr. Jackson certainly deserves credit, so far as the procuring of this drawing.

2nd. As Mr. Jackson has become a complainant in public, I shall now state where Mr. Jackson did not satisfy his employer. It was one thing to procure a handsome perspective drawing, and another to make good working plans, of noble and correct proportions, from the same. This was the turning-point of the whole, and eminently required a practical man to do this well. I found, however, merely to mention a single point, that Mr. Jackson's working drawings showed columns only twelve feet high but five thick in diameter. Now, such a mass of heavy masonry as this, and such heavy proportions as it involved, filled me with alarm as to the result,

and after due deliberation, and considering how entirely Mr. Jackson was going against his employer's views, nothing seemed to me (even if his demeanour and temper had been what they ought to have been) but to go elsewhere, as I could not take upon myself the responsibility of cutting his columns in two, while I added several feet to their altitude.

3rd. I then turned to my present architect, having told him I was quite decided and had finally made up my mind not to employ Mr. Jackson further, as I could not get from him what I wanted. I instructed him that I required Mr. Jackson's columns to be elevated, and only half their diameter retained, and to give me bold buttresses, lofty elevations, large and noble windows, also selecting, not the debased style of perpendicular, but its present period. Mr. Mitchell, certainly undertook to say that he would give me what I wanted. I have given him a trial, and he is in all points satisfying me. In nothing is he following Mr. Jackson's plans. In fact they could not, in his estimation, be worked out at all, without considerable alterations and amendments, and as I am sure you would be ready to secure for Mr. Jackson whatever credit can be given him, still I feel certain that you would be glad to do ample justice to modest and silent merit, and I now invite you or any gentleman whose judgment you can depend upon, to call at my house, when you can see the drawings I have rejected, and I doubt not you will at once perceive that in nothing are we following out the plans of Mr. Jackson. In truth, I would much rather have left the old church as it was than sanction such specimens of proportions as those which Mr. Jackson claims the merit of having executed, while the avowment, that I am now carrying them out under the superintendence of another architect, is altogether contrary to fact.

4th. And now with reference to the Cambridge Camden Society. In consequence of the manner in which Mr. Jackson is bringing myself and them before the public and in print, I shall feel it my duty not only to myself but to that society, to let them see the real drawings which Mr. Jackson can alone claim as his designs. If Mr. Jackson wanted the true opinion of the Camden, his course should have been not simply to forward them the noble ideas of a cruciform church, which, with its lantern tower, and lofty spire and pierced clerestory, is older than the days of Poore or Wykeham, Waynflete or Islip. An abbey-like church they must praise, and feel it their duty to encourage. The design, however, of such a church being erected in Leamington originated with Mr. Jackson's employer, and as for a mere perspective sketch the Camden Society will doubtless be able to tell you complainant that the Vicar of Leamington need not go beyond the handy-work of some of the young ladies of his parish, who could easily have given a pretty water-colour drawing finished to a scale, on that scale being given to them. Where an architect was wanted, and where he could exhibit merit, would be in furnishing proper drawings from the perspective one, which would show suitable proportions for columns, buttresses, windows, aisles, doorway, &c. Now, it was precisely here that Mr. Jackson failed me. I would have nothing to do with his ideas of proportions, or his selection of styles; and I can assure that architect, that the gentlemen of the Camden Society, when they find in what way he has procured their opinion, and how he has been using it against his employer, will feel it their duty to be careful how they in future receive his communications, while his entire conduct throughout is more and more continuing me I exercised a wise discretion in placing myself in the hands of Mr. Mitchell, who, I doubt not, were I to leave him to-morrow, knows too well what is due both to himself and his profession, needlessly to rush into print with insinuations against the clergyman of a parish who had given him for some months a willing employment in carrying out and restoring amongst us the old and elegant design of a cruciform church with all its suitable beauties and exquisite proportions. And I now can only assure you that "the pillars elaborately clustered," "the windows liberally moulded and enriched with tracery," which you were so good as favourably to notice, are entirely and altogether planned by Mr. Mitchell, and in no sense whatever can they be considered Mr. Jackson's. For I again repeat, that so far from my consenting to adopt Mr. Jackson's short and thick, and heavy columns, the attempt to force them upon me by defending their necessity, was the original cause of my ceasing to employ that gentleman as my architect. I feel it only due to Mr. Mitchell to make this statement, and requesting its insertion in your very interesting publication, to which I shall be thankful if you add my name as one of its subscribers, for the more it is known amongst the clergy, the more good will it do.

I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

THE VICAR OF LEAMINGTON PRIORY.  
The Priory, Leamington, August 28, 1843.